THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA):

(a) The total number of post offices opened in Punjab during the financial year 1996-97 and till date is 12.

(b) The total number of post offices opened throughout the country during the last three years is 490.

(c) No proposal for opening new post office in the State is pending at present.

(d) One post office has been upgraded in the State during the said financial year. So far only the Annual Plan 1997-98 has been approved by the Planning Commission.

A target for opening 2 Departmental Sub-Post offices has been fixed for 1997-98 for Punjab which could be by way of upgradation.

Telephone Facility for Village Panchayats in Vidarabha Region

782. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Village Panchayats in Vidarbha region of Maharashtra provided with telephone facility so far, as on date, district-wise;

(b) the Panchayats in the region which are yet to be provided with telephone facility, district-wise; and

(c) by when Government propose to provide telephone facility to all the Panchayats of the region?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) and (b) District-wise information is given in the Statement, *(see* below)

(c) All the Panchayats in Vidarbha region will be provided with telephone facility by the end of the Ninth Five Year Plan.

Statement

Status of Village Panchayats Provided with Telephone Facility

SI. No.	Name of SSA or District	Total No. of Village Panchayats	No. of Village Panchayats Having Telephone Facility	Balance to be provided
1.	Akola	936	936	NIL
2.	Amravati	804	685	110
3.	Bhandapa	1046	845	201
4.	Buldhana	828	812	10
5.	Chandrapur	804	655	149
6.	Gadchiroli	458	279	179
7.	Wardha	481	481	Nil
8.	Yeotmal	. 1123	779	344
9.	Nagpur	1584	1235	349
	TOTAL	8064	6707	1357